

Dear Parent or Guardian,

July 2021




The East Longmeadow School Food and Nutrition Services Program welcomes your input and support in order to guarantee the wide variety of nutritious lunches offered to our students.

NUTRITION:

We are excited about all our continued changes and selections for school lunch. Our goal is to make sure your children have a variety of healthy choices every day. We are constantly revising our recipes in an effort to reduce the amount of fat, sodium and sugar in the meals that are served to our students. School lunch is a convenient option for busy families and offers all the dietary requirements for your children. The menus are based on the new meal pattern required by the USDA, which was implemented in the fall of 2012. Changes are the result of the Healthy Hunger Free Kids Act passed in 2010 and are based on the most recent Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The goals of our required meal pattern include: increasing fruits, vegetables and whole grains, setting calorie ranges for each age/grade group, and developing and teaching healthy eating habits.

We do offer a la carte items at lunch. Items are individually priced. Cartons of milk cost 50 cents without the lunch. These products meet or exceed the new nutrition regulations for 2021.

LUNCH PRICES FOR 2021-2022:

 UNIVERSAL FREE MEALS! East Longmeadow Public School Food Service is providing FREE meals to all students under the USDA's Child Nutrition Program's Seamless Summer Option (SSO). Your student will be offered one NO CHARGE lunch each day at their school through June 2022. Any snack, ala carte item, or second meal is extra and will be charged to your student's lunch account.



payschoolscentral.com:

Pay Schools Central is an online VIEW and pay option for families. Initialize your account to see the past 30 days of transactions, set up email reminders, and arrange low balance alerts ~ all at no cost. Paying online is an option but fees will apply. Please refer to our school lunch website at www.eastlongmeadowma.gov for all the detailed information about payschoolscentral.com. Checks and cash are still always accepted directly at each school (in a clearly labeled envelope to school lunch with student's name) or mailed to the Food Service Office at 180 Maple Street, East Longmeadow, MA 01028.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

It is important to understand that our total income is obtained from Federal and State reimbursement along with the charge for lunches. No monies are appropriated to the Lunch Program from the School Department budget. The town does not pay for labor, equipment, repairs, supplies, etc. We do not receive free food. When USDA foods are available, we can purchase them at a reduced cost and in limited quantity.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR FREE OR REDUCED LUNCH:

Depending on your financial situation, your child (ren) may qualify for a free or reduced price meal. There are new income guidelines each year, so please fill out a new application. There are other benefits/entitlements that work in conjunction with this qualifying eligibility. All information remains confidential as required by law. Students are in no way identified as participating in the program, unless they themselves tell their friends.

- ▶ You must apply **each** year for Free & Reduced lunches to verify your eligibility
- ▶ If you have already received a letter in the mail regarding "Notice of Direct Certification 2021-2022" from us, you do not need to fill out a paper application
- ▶ Please include a signature and the last four digits of your social security number on your Free & Reduced Meal Application
- ▶ Use one Free and Reduced Price School Meals Application for all students in your household
- ▶ Return the completed application to school

Remember...You may apply for free or reduced price lunches at any time during the school year.

Please call me at 525-5450 (select "7980" for Food Services) if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions.

Lori Pahl, Director of Food Services